

Loakes Park comes under microscope

WYCOMBE Wanderers' application to join the Football League came under the microscope on Tuesday when a high powered delegation of officials inspected the Loakes Park facilities.

Sir Matt Busby, the former Manchester United manager and now a member of the League's management committee was one of a three-man team that spent more than an hour at the ground.

During that time they had a good look round the facilities and no doubt studied the sloping pitch. They also chatted at length with three Wycombe officials — chairman Reg Williams, vice-chairman Brian Lee and secretary John Goldsworthy.

Apart from Sir Matt, the league's delegation comprised Birmingham City's Jack Wiseman, chairman of the management committee, and league deputy secretary

the talks took place in a friendly atmosphere.

"The league officials put us at our ease immediately," said Mr Goldsworthy. "There was a mutual respect. They did not look down on us and this led to a frank and friendly discussion."

All smiles

After the meeting at which the league officials, pointed out the financial implications of joining the league, there were smiles all round.

But it will be at least a week before Wycombe learn whether their ground, with its renowned slope, has been graded good enough for league football.

If it has, then Wycombe's name will be put forward to the Football League annual meeting next month together with Alliance League champions Altrincham and the four clubs seeking re-election to Division Four.

The Blues would have little time to do much lobbying among Football League clubs although Mr Lee, as director of Risham Abbey National Sports Centre, is well-known to many of them.

But it must be admitted that the likelihood is that Wycombe's ground will be turned down. If that is the case then the Wanderers would be told exactly what they have to do to get it up to standard.

Either way, by applying to join the Football League, they will know exactly how they stand.

One point that did come out at the meeting was that the Alliance League, which has pushed itself forward as the top competition in non-league football, does not have any special relationship with the Football League.

Indeed, with Sutton United and Bishops Cleeve contesting tomorrow's FA

Trophy final at Wembley, it could be argued that the Isthmian League is in the ascendancy at present.

Wycombe could well learn of the Football League's decision while they are away on the tour of Portugal from May 24-31. This would leave them even less time to do any lobbying.

Tour plans

A party of 24 including 15 players will be staying on the coast in Estoril, and while there will play matches against two teams from Lisbon.

On Tuesday, May 26, they will meet Belenenses from Division One of the Portuguese League while two days later they face Division Two side Atletico.

Manager Mike Keen will not be going with them so that Brian Lee will be in charge of the team together with Reserve team boss John Maskell.



Sir Matt Busby (centre), a member of the Football League management committee, standing on the Loakes Park terraces with Wycombe vice-chairman Brian Lee and chairman Reg Williams.

Whatever they thought about the ground — either adverse or favourable — they kept to themselves although